

**Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation  
Cumming School of Medicine  
University of Calgary**

**Curriculum Review  
Public Report**

**December 2017**

## Program Context

Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (CRDS) is an interdisciplinary platform of academic inquiry. The Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation (BCR) program delivers curricula in domains of leadership development, community capacity building, innovation and diverse partnerships aimed at improving well-being of people with diverse abilities, promoting social change and building corresponding knowledge and theory. The undergraduate BCR program is complemented by graduate (MDCS, MSc, PhD) degrees aimed at the examination of disability as a social, cultural, economic and political phenomenon.

The CRDS program was established in 1979 in the (then) Faculty of Education. In 2007, we aligned with the Faculty of Medicine (now Cumming School of Medicine). Housed within the Department of Community Health Sciences, CRDS is an interdisciplinary platform of academic inquiry delivering undergraduate and graduate courses and degrees aimed at the examination of disability as a social, cultural, economic and political phenomenon. The core faculty includes 4 Associate Professors, 1 Assistant Professor and 2 Instructors.

Our history as an interdisciplinary program in the field of community rehabilitation and disability studies means we are aligned with those who have experienced marginalization, discrimination and disenfranchisement as well as with those who share their lives. We study the balances of power, particularly as these relate to help-seeking and access to socially-valued roles and supports. We anchor our work in explicit study and application of personal and professional values; embracing principles of dignity and respect, choice and control, inclusion and contribution, for people with varying abilities. Accordingly, through our theory-driven research and teaching, we strive to understand and deconstruct hierarchies, share power, and disrupt systems that reinforce exclusion, dependence and hinder opportunities for self-determination.

Our fields of practice and corresponding disability scholarship have evolved and changed dramatically over the last three decades from focusing on service delivery in large institutions to favoring community-based services, peer support, natural supports, user-directed supports and self-managed care. The very understanding and theorizing of disability has moved from viewing the body as the primary location of the disablement to an understanding that the main cause of disablement resides in the “ableist” social environment within which the person is immersed. We are part of an ongoing academic discourse over whether an ability difference is impairment or a variation (see for example discourses around deaf culture or the neurodiversity movement). We are proud of our place in social innovation aimed at helping people lead valued lives of their choosing and we steadfastly promote advocacy, social justice, critical inquiry and analysis.

The vision of the CRDS group is:

Responsive, sophisticated and just understandings of people of diverse abilities.

Our mission is:

To generate research, education, policy and practice partnerships to improve well-being of people with diverse abilities.

The BCR program includes:

- BCR – 4-year degree program
- BCR – 2-year degree completion
- BCR/BA or BSc (Psychology)

The 2-year degree program is available only to those receiving block transfer credit from a previously completed, approved college diploma.

## Curriculum Review Process

This report, which followed an external program review, reflects a curriculum review that began in 2015 and which has undergone subsequent iterative steps of reflection and revision to produce this final report. The initial curriculum review was conducted by members of the CRDS program. This was followed by consultation with review experts in the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning and further discussions in the Cumming School of Medicine with program faculty, the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) and the Senior Associate Dean (Education). The curriculum review did not directly solicit student input; however, student perceptions are captured through the inclusion of external survey data.

The curriculum review process identified 24 program-level learning outcomes (PLO). These were grouped into four domains, as follows:

1. Ability differences that have been labeled as impairments, and accessing resources in relation to ability difference.
2. Professional practice realms.
3. Community development, advocacy, systems and social policy development
4. Program design, development, management and evaluation

Five guiding questions were developed to assess alignment of course and PLOs, determine the diversity and appropriateness of instructional and assessment methods, as well as strengths and gaps in the curriculum. The analysis of curriculum mapping and external survey data led to several major findings:

- All PLOs are being addressed in the courses delivered in the BCR program, and instructional and assessment methods are consistent with the nature of the program.
- Minor gaps were identified in PLO, course content and objectives, as were possible areas of redundancy and overlap.



- Students are generally satisfied with the program; however, the need for greater interaction between students and faculty, improved communication in senior-level courses and increased student input into the program were identified.
- Opportunities to reflect on the timing and nature of assessments emerged.

As a follow-up to curriculum mapping, and in response to the reality of fiscal constraints across campus and the limited size of our program faculty, this curriculum review provided an opportunity to critically reflect on curriculum, CRDS capacity to continue offering high quality programs to both on-campus and distance students, and to consider both short-term and long-term options. Based on these efforts, the proposed action plan has grouped recommendations into:

### **Curriculum Redesign**

A redesigned program curriculum through which course offerings will be streamlined to merge content, reduce redundancy and maximize relevance and laddering of learning objectives and depth. This redesign is proposed by grouping courses into five defined domains: Foundational Knowledge; Health; Leadership and Human Services; Critical Disability Studies; Advocacy, Community and Policy. These are joined by Critical Thinking as a cross-cutting emphasis. Future consideration will be given to the balance of courses offered in face-to-face format to those offered online, and the long-term viability of continuing to offer the program both on campus and through distance delivery.

### **Learning Assessment**

Develop a faculty workshop through which we evaluate the timing of assessments throughout the term and through which we explore opportunities for formative assessment and the benefits of timely and detailed feedback in our courses.

### **Student Engagement**

Working collaboratively with students to identify opportunities for increased student engagement, enhanced communication, development of a student survey and support for exploration of career paths.

The curriculum review process has demonstrated that CRDS has a strong BCR program, with a curriculum that is well-developed and meets the needs of most students. Findings from the process also presented an opportunity to address limits of resource capacity to enhance coherence of course objectives and alignment with revised program objectives over the next year as well as stimulating the opportunity to determine the long-term feasibility of our distance delivery programs. Recommendations from the Action Plan will be reviewed and implemented where appropriate and approved, with interim progress reports submitted to the Office of the Provost. This will position the program for continued success and leadership in the field of community rehabilitation and disability studies.

## **BCR Program Mechanisms: Updating of BCR Calendar Entry and Enrolment Management**

### **Updating BCR Calendar Entry**

In reviewing course documents for the BCR curriculum review, we identified an opportunity to revise and clarify the Calendar entry for the BCR program. In collaboration with the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) in the Cumming School of Medicine, we re-wrote the program description, clarifying routes of admission, program course requirements, program regulations and aligning the content in a style consistent with University Calendar standards. In the course listing section, we clarified course descriptions, removed courses no longer offered, and added course pre- and anti-requisites as one mechanism to optimize enrolment management (see below for further discussion). These changes were rigorously reviewed and subsequently approved by the Cumming School of Medicine's Strategic Education Council, by the Calendar Working Group and by the General Faculties' Council Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee. These changes are reflected in the 2017-18 University Calendar.

We are now implementing mechanisms to ensure annual review of the Calendar information with the goal of implementing timely changes.

### **Enrolment management for CORE courses**

We are pleased that our CORE courses are popular among undergraduates at the University of Calgary. However, we recognize that we must ensure that students enrolled in the BCR program, and those enrolled in Minors associated with our program, have timely access to courses required for graduation. Thus, we have taken a four-pronged approach to manage enrolment in CORE courses.

## **Self-reflection and curriculum revision**

The BCR program is an aspirational one; it is among few disability studies programs in Canada and thus aims to serve those both locally and across the country. However, we remain a small program with a limited number of program faculty. Thus, in seeking to provide relevant program content through both face-to-face instruction or through distance delivery, we have traditionally relied heavily on sessional instructors. In response to the reality of fiscal constraints across campus, program requirements and the limited size of our full-time program faculty, we used this curriculum review and its associated efforts as an opportunity to critically reflect on our curriculum, our capacity to continue offering high quality graduate and undergraduate programs to both on-campus and distance students in a fiscally sound manner, and to consider both short-term and long-term options.

On April 21, 2017, the faculty and staff of the CRDS program held a facilitated day-long program retreat to discuss these matters, as well as those pertaining to graduate offerings in CRDS,



which are not further addressed herein. Curriculum and resource capacity issues were identified for key aspects for discussion. The faculty has thus proposed revised degree requirements

### **Proposed Revised Degree Requirements:**

We recognize that **critical thinking**<sup>1</sup> should be foundational to all course objectives and across all program objectives. At an all-day retreat of CRDS faculty and staff, which involved reviewing each course and its content, we concluded that the conceptual domains identified (Foundations; Health; Leadership and Human Services; Critical Disability Studies; Advocacy, Community and Policy; Experiential Practice) reflect the key outcomes expected for all BCR students. In other words, the curriculum review and our retreat have guided us to update the language used in defining our courses into key domains will match what we are actually teaching in the classes. The impact is greater alignment between curriculum and expected outcomes.

### **Action Plan**

Through this curriculum review process and the critical reflection that emerged from the early stages of it, we identified three primary areas for emphasis in the coming years:

- Curriculum redesign
- Learning assessment
- Student engagement

Elements related to these components are identified in the Action Plan Chart, with associated timelines.

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<sup>1</sup> the process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to reach an answer or conclusion, including qualities, concepts and processes such as creativity, imagination, discovery, reflection, empathy, connecting knowing, feminist theory, subjectivity, ambiguity, and inconclusiveness

## ACTION PLAN CHART

Short-term: One year or less

Medium-term: Two to three years

### Curriculum Redesign Action Plan

Recommendation:	Action Items	Timeline for Implementation	Lead Responsibility
<p>Based on decisions to reduce number of courses delivered and address program objectives, revise designated course objectives through amalgamation, revision and 'scaffolding' of course content. Revise those course descriptions for submission to course and calendar change process.</p> <p>Identify revised courses to be offered for 2018-19 and determine course offering for 2019- beyond</p>	<p>Recommended CORE courses to be delivered 2018-19</p> <p><b>CORE Required:</b>            205            207            209            321            487 (2 sections)            425 (2 sections)            583 (2 sections)            594 (2 sections)            595 (2 sections)            597            598            1 of 471 (2 sections),473* (alternate years) or 475</p> <p><b>CORE Options.</b>            541            547            545 • not offered 2017 only            553            569 (2 sections)</p> <p>Includes Practicums:            CORE 207,            487,594,595,597,            598</p>	<p>CORE courses to deliver 2018 -19, dependent on approval of course description and calendar change process (submission prepared for Fall 2017 approvals).</p> <p><b>CORE Required:</b>            205            207            209            321            487 (2 sections)            425 (2 sections)            583 (2 sections)            594 (2 sections)            595 (2 sections)            597            598            1 of 471 (2 sections),473* (alternate years) or 475</p> <p><b>CORE Options.</b>            541            547            545</p>	<p>Program Faculty</p>

		553•online required course 569 (2 sections)	
Revise program objectives in the domains of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundational Knowledge</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Leadership and Human Services</li> <li>• Critical Disability Studies</li> <li>• Advocacy, Community and Policy</li> </ul>	Identify opportunities in existing and emerging courses to align with revised objectives (see proposed revised curriculum)	Short-medium term (incorporate in documents for approval; action in 2018-19)	BCR Program Director and BCR Curriculum Committee
Clearly articulate “critical thinking” component to course objectives and align with PLOs	Where missing, identify focus on critical thinking in all CORE course outlines	Short term – ensure focus is clear in 2018-19 course outlines	BCR Program Director
Undertake a community needs survey to improve professional skill development based on anticipated needs	Develop and circulate a survey for community partners currently hosting students for practicum  Respond to survey by adjusting practicum courses as needed	Short-term  Medium-term	BCR Program Director and Practicum Review Committee
Expand and enhance student critical thinking and research capacity	Revise content of CORE 425 to include research design  Incorporate option for research project in CORE 594, 595, 597 and 598	Medium-term  Medium-term	BCR Program Director  Course Instructors to identify relevant research projects to advertise to students



Following implementation of revised curriculum, re-initiate curriculum mapping to examine the impact of the changes	Curriculum mapping of revised curriculum	Medium-long term	BCR Program Director and BCR Curriculum Committee
Examine long-term feasibility of offering program through both on-campus and through distance delivery	Map impact of requiring multiple course sections in different formats	Short-medium term	BCR Program Committee and BCR Curriculum Committee

### Learning Assessment Action Plan

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>
Evaluate timing of learning assessment across courses	Through a staff meeting/faculty workshop, examine timing of assessment throughout term. Where possible, incorporate ladder assessments of learning and avoid periods of intensity (multiple assignments across common courses due simultaneously)	Short-term	BCR Program Director
Clearly explain course goals and requirements	Through staff meeting, remind program staff of the importance of articulating course goals/requirements early in the term; Encourage students to read course outline	Short term	BCR Program Director
Provide feedback on drafts/work-in-progress	Host workshop for faculty on	Short term	BCR Program Director (in

	assessment/incorporating formative feedback		collaboration with Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning)
Provide timely feedback	Host workshop for faculty on assessment/incorporating formative feedback	Short term	BCR Program Director (in collaboration with Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning)

### Student Engagement Action Plan

Recommendation:	Action Items	Timeline for Implementation	Lead Responsibility
Develop a communication plan for BCR students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• academic progress and performance</li> <li>• career plans,</li> <li>• opportunities for enrichment of learning experiences</li> </ul>	Strike a student-led engagement team to identify mechanisms to build student engagement	Short term	Student Advisor
	Develop web content related to career pathways	Short term	BCR Director, Student Advisor, Administrative Assistant
	Host career forums with community partners and locally-based alumni	Short-medium	BCR Director, Student Advisor, Faculty
Promote opportunities for student research experiences	Revised CORE 594, 595, 597, 598 to include option to conduct research project	Short-term	BCR Curriculum Committee

	Promote summer student research opportunities	2018 - beyond	Program Faculty
Develop survey for continuing and graduating BCR students with focus on student experience	Develop and pilot survey	Short-term	BCR Program Director and Student Advisor
	Develop action plan to respond to concerns identified in survey	Medium-term	BCR Program Director
<p>Communicate opportunities for student engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCR Undergraduate Students' Association</li> <li>• Peer Mentorship program</li> <li>• Town halls (twice per year)</li> <li>• Orientation Week</li> <li>• Social Media engagement</li> <li>• New opportunities identified by student engagement committee</li> </ul>	Strike a faculty-student committee on student engagement to develop and implement a plan to address student needs and engagement.	ongoing	Student Advisor and Program Faculty



## Communication Plan

The findings, action plan and revised curriculum will be communicated to faculty members, instructors, students and staff through faculty and staff meetings, announcements via email and the program website. Current students will be reassured that courses required for their programs will continue to be offered during the transition time. Through the BCR Program Director, the BCR Curriculum Review Committee will report to the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) during monthly Directors' Meetings. Finally, a presentation summarizing the curriculum review process and findings will be made to the CSM Strategic Education Council. The proposed curriculum revisions will also go from approval to the CSM Strategic Education Council, the Calendar Working Group and the General Faculties Council's Curriculum and Calendar Subcommittee.

## Conclusion

The curriculum review process has demonstrated that CRDS has a strong BCR program. However, findings from the process also presented an opportunity to address limits of resource capacity to enhance coherence of course objectives and alignment with revised program objectives over the next year. Recommendations from the Action Plan will be reviewed and implemented where appropriate and approved through faculty and university-wide committees, with interim progress reports submitted to the Office of the Provost. This will be followed by monitoring and mapping of the revised curriculum. This will position the program for continued success and leadership in the field of community rehabilitation and disability studies.